

Purton

Parish Housing Needs Survey

Survey Report

January 2012

Wiltshire Council
County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge BA14 8JN

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1. Parish Summary

The Parish of Purton is in the Royal Wootton Bassett & Cricklade Community Area within the local authority area of Wiltshire.

There is a population of 3940 according to the 2001 census, comprised of 1580 households. ONS predictions for 2011 suggest a population of 4010 in 1720 households.¹

The Parish of Purton boasts its own distinctive character and possesses remarkable landmarks and archaeology from the Iron Age, and Roman times.

The main village of Purton sits on the brow of a hill, with excellent views across to the Thames floodplains. The village owes its origins to its agricultural heritage as do the small villages of Purton Stoke, Bentham and a number of hamlets.

Local facilities in the Parish include shops, two pubs, a post office, a Doctor's surgery, two dentist's surgeries, a veterinary surgery and an organic farm shop. The distinctive Workingmen's Institute houses the Library run by volunteers and the Purton Museum. The Village Hall provides a venue for local events and the Village Centre offers a wide range of recreational facilities.

St. Mary's CE primary school and Bradon Forest comprehensive school provide excellent educational facilities for the local community.

Although the new urban conurbation of West Swindon has moved ever closer to the Parish boundaries, the housing needs of the Parish are distinct from the needs of Swindon. The Parish has a strong network of community organisations and societies that provide a vibrant community spirit.

A team of local residents is currently consulting with the local community on the preparation of a Parish Plan.

¹ <http://www.intelligenenetwork.org.uk/population-and-census/>

2. Introduction

In 2011, Wiltshire Council's Development Officers discussed carrying out a rural housing needs survey with Purton Parish Council, to establish if there was a proven need for new affordable housing in the Parish and potentially to use the findings of the survey to inform the Parish Plan. Such surveys assist officers in identifying those areas with the greatest housing problems so that scarce financial resources can be put to best use.

Experience has shown that these surveys need to be carried out at regular intervals if the results are to remain relevant in identifying trends.

- The Principal Development Officers are employed by Wiltshire Council's new housing team to assist in the delivery of new affordable housing.
- The Principal Development Officers work closely with rural communities, housing associations, local authorities and landowners to meet the affordable housing needs of rural communities.
- The survey is funded by Wiltshire Rural Investment Partnership and Wiltshire Council.

3. Aim

The aim of carrying out the survey is to investigate the affordable housing needs of local people (or those who have a need to live in the Parish or the locality) of the Parish.

- 'Housing need' can be defined as the need for an individual or household to obtain housing which is suitable to their circumstances.
- It implies that there are problems or limitations with the household's current housing arrangements and that the household is unable to afford or to access suitable accommodation in the private sector.
- Such problems may be concerned with housing costs, size, location, layout, state of repair, or security of tenure either immediately or in the future.
- The expression 'affordable housing' means low-cost, subsidised housing available to rent or part-buy from a local authority or a registered social landlord such as a housing association.
- Housing associations are 'not for profit' organisations which provide housing in accordance with regulations set down by the Government.
- No local authority provides housing in the Parish, therefore, all 'affordable housing' is provided by housing associations

4. Survey Distribution and Methodology

In order to carry out the housing needs survey, questionnaires were delivered to the Parish Council for distribution in November 2011.

To encourage a good response, households were given a pre-paid envelope in which to return the completed survey. Wiltshire Council applies its data protection policy to responses, to ensure that all survey responses remain anonymous.

Residents were asked to return the completed surveys in the pre-paid envelopes by 16th December 2011. The forms were recorded and analysed by the Housing Strategy department at Wiltshire Council.

- A total of 1732 questionnaires were distributed within the Parish.
- Everyone was asked to complete the first section of the form.
- If a household considered itself in need, or likely to be in need, of affordable housing within the next five years, it was invited to complete the rest of the survey.
- There was a good response rate of 30.7% with 532 replies received.
- The received information refers to the survey respondents and should not be taken as indicative of the population of the Parish.
- Thirteen responses were made online.

5. Key Findings

This report is divided into two parts. The first part looks at existing households in the Parish in order to provide a description of the current housing in the Parish. This part also describes the levels of new affordable housing, if any, which would be supported by residents of the parish.

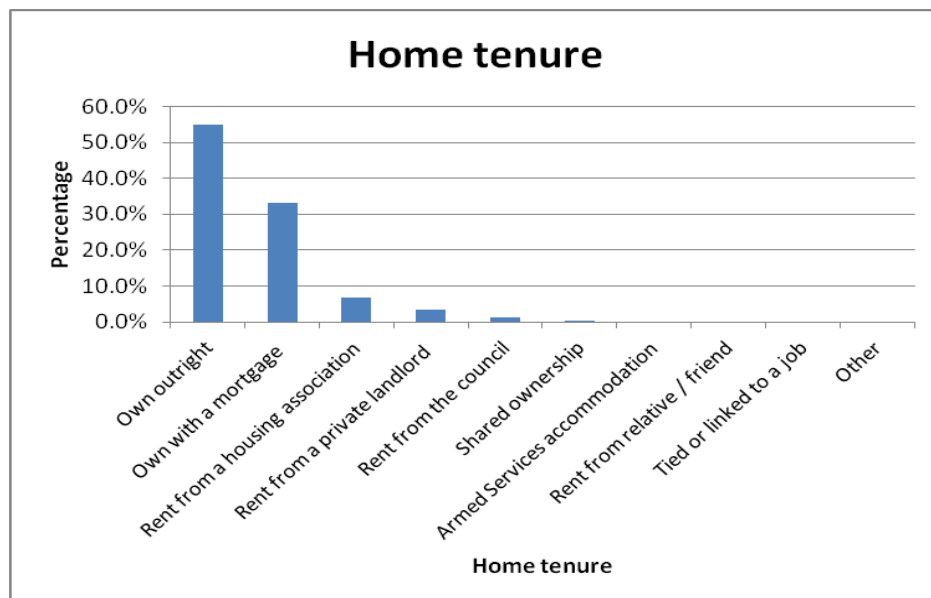
The second part examines the households who have declared a need for new housing in the Parish. It begins by describing the overall need for both open market and affordable housing in the parish, as reflected in the survey. A financial assessment is then made in order to determine the numbers of households who have a current need for new *affordable* housing. The results of this financial assessment are summarised in the 'Recommendations' of the report (section 8).

Part One – Households currently living in the parish

The first question asked on the survey was whether the respondent's home in the Parish is their main home. 100% of those who replied indicated that their home in the Parish is their main home, and 0% that it is their second home.

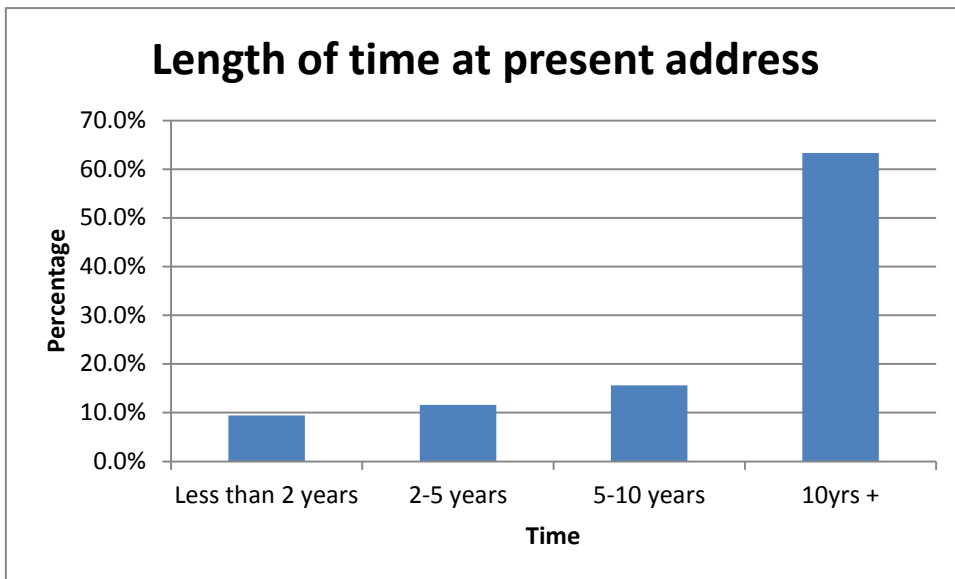
The 2001 Census data, configured for the Parish area, indicates that 80.6% of households were owner-occupying, 11.5% were renting from housing associations, 5.5% were privately renting, and 2.3% of households were living rent free.

The chart below shows the tenure of respondents to the survey, which largely reflects the tenure spread described in the Census, although with a slight bias toward owner-occupiers. The majority (88.3%) of respondents were owner-occupiers, while 7.9% of respondents were living in homes rented from housing associations,² 3.4% in privately rented accommodation, and 0.4% in shared ownership (part rent / part buy) properties.



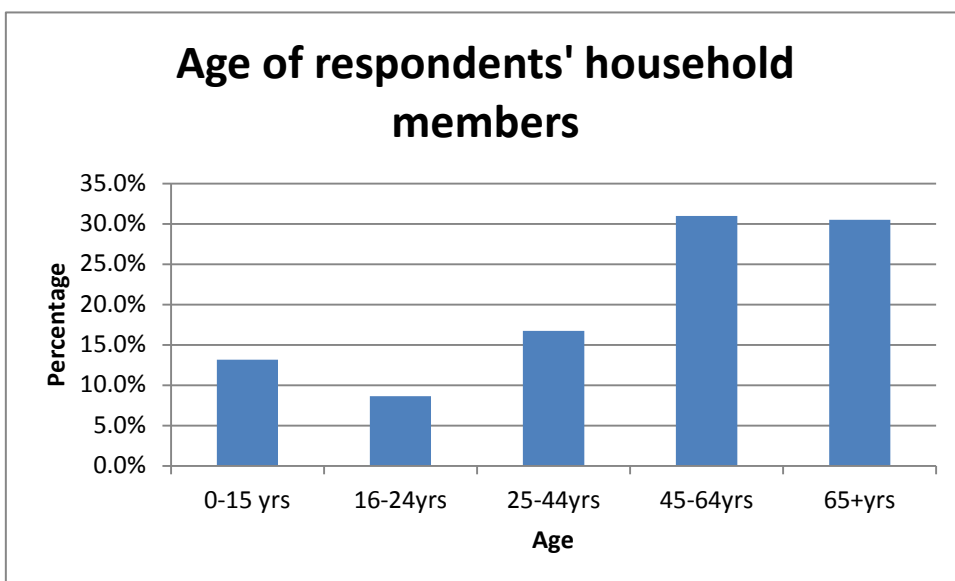
² This figure includes the 1.2% of respondents, indicated in the chart, who described themselves as renting from the council. As there is no council housing in the Purton parish, this is taken to be an input error between 'renting from a housing association' and 'renting from the council.'

The chart below indicates the length of time respondents have lived in the Parish. It shows that the majority of people who responded to the survey have lived in the parish for more than two years, which is appropriate for the high levels of owner occupation among survey respondents.



The survey also shows that the majority of respondents to the Parish survey live in larger family homes, with 74.8% of respondents having 3 or more bedrooms in their property, 19.7% having two bedrooms and 5.4% of respondents living in a home with one bedroom. The majority of respondents (81.4%) live in detached or semi-detached properties.

These responses indicate relatively high levels of under-occupation in the Parish. While the majority of respondents live in larger, detached homes, the majority (72.9%) also have households composed of two or fewer persons. These levels of under-occupation are an expected corollary of larger numbers of older people, as under-occupation is more common in older person households, and indeed the spread of ages recorded in the survey indicates that 30.5% of respondents' household members were aged 65+:



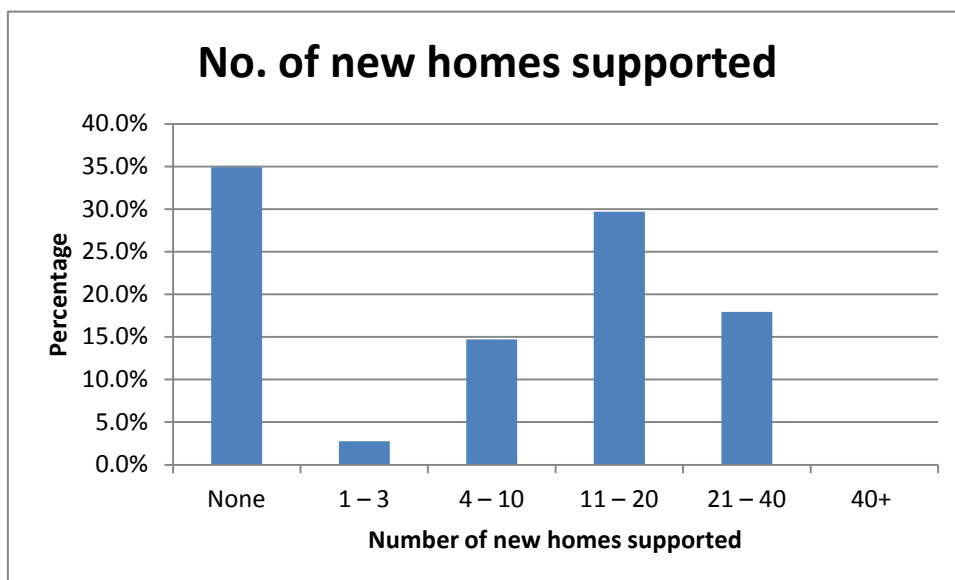
There were also, however, a significant proportion of households responding to the survey with members aged 25-64 and with children aged under 16 years old. This indicates a spread of different household types in the Parish, from older person households with fewer members, to many younger households with children.

The distance travelled to work can also be a good measure of the sustainability of local development, as more people working locally can indicate an ongoing need for local housing. The table below shows how far people in the respondents' households travelled to work:

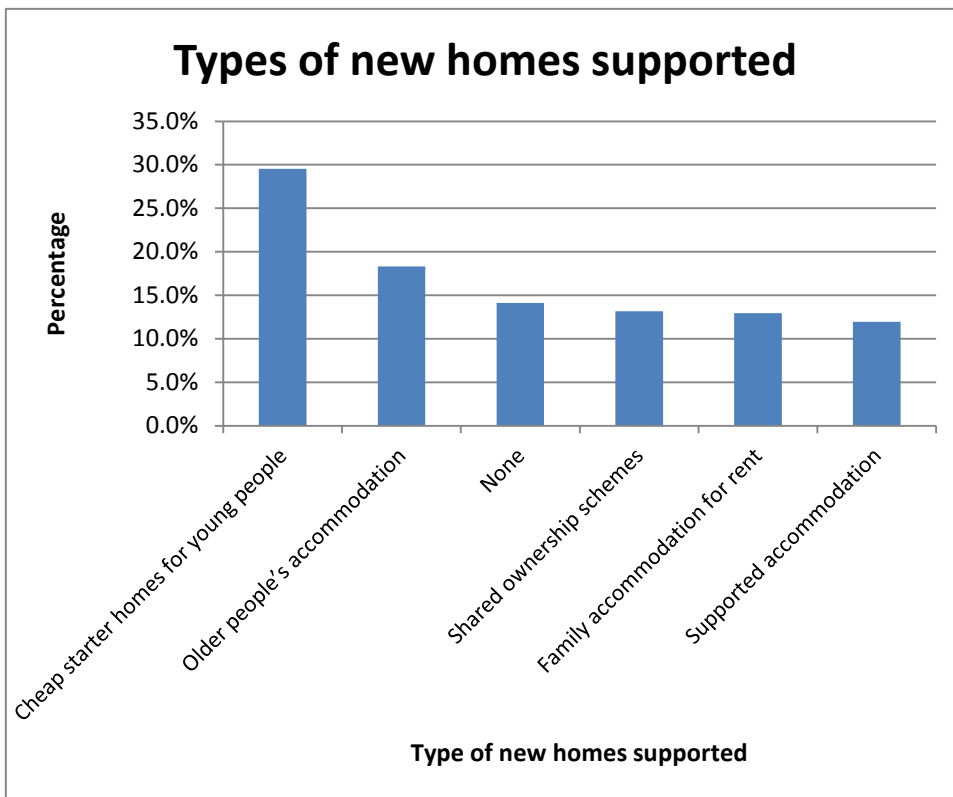
	Distance to work				Total
	Up to 2 miles	2 - 10 miles	10 - 50 miles	50 miles +	
Person 1	47	99	54	21	221
Person 2	31	72	24	10	137
Person 3	3	16	2	0	21
Person 4	3	3	0	0	6
Person 5	0	3	0	0	3
Total	84	193	80	31	388

These results show that the majority of households' members usually travelled under 10 miles to work each day. Respondents were also asked whether anyone currently living in their household would need separate accommodation in the parish now or in the near future, to which 5.3% of respondents answered 'yes'. This result also indicates a sustained level of need for housing in the Parish.

Respondents were then asked how many new homes they would support being built in the Parish. These results were quite mixed: 34.9% of respondents were opposed to any new housing development in the Parish; 17.4% of respondents supported developments of between one and ten new homes; and 47.6% expressed support for larger developments of between eleven and forty new homes. There was no support for developments of 40+ new homes.



Respondents were asked what types of new housing they would support. The majority of respondents (29.5%) indicated that they would support the development of cheap starter homes for young people, and more than 15% of respondents also supported the development of older people's accommodation.



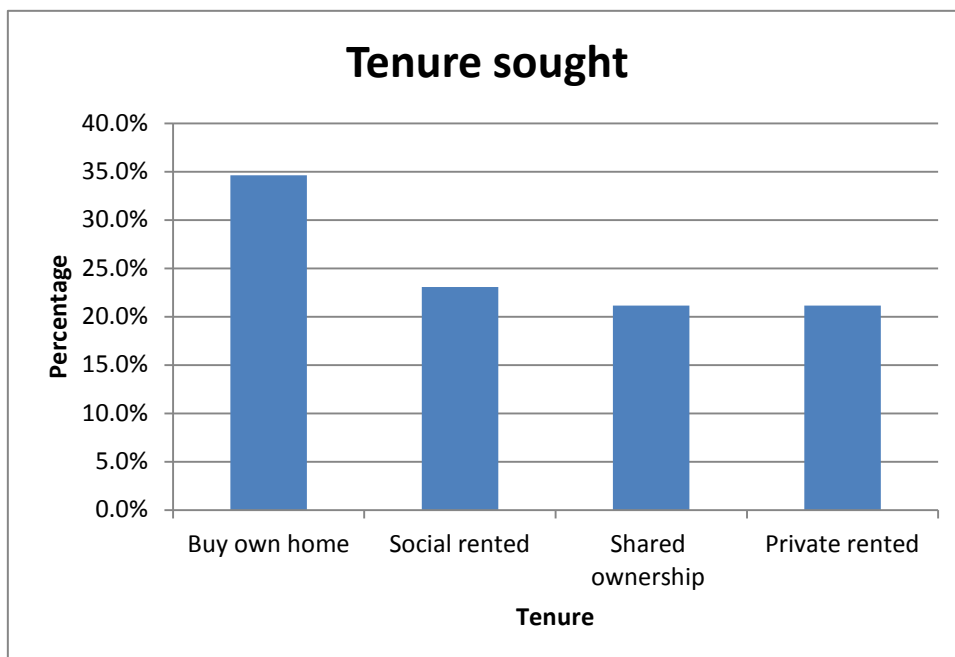
Part two – Housing Need

This part of the report looks, initially, at all the responses to section two of the survey, in order to give a broad picture of the need for both market and affordable housing in the parish. A financial assessment is then made in order to describe in more detail the need for affordable housing.

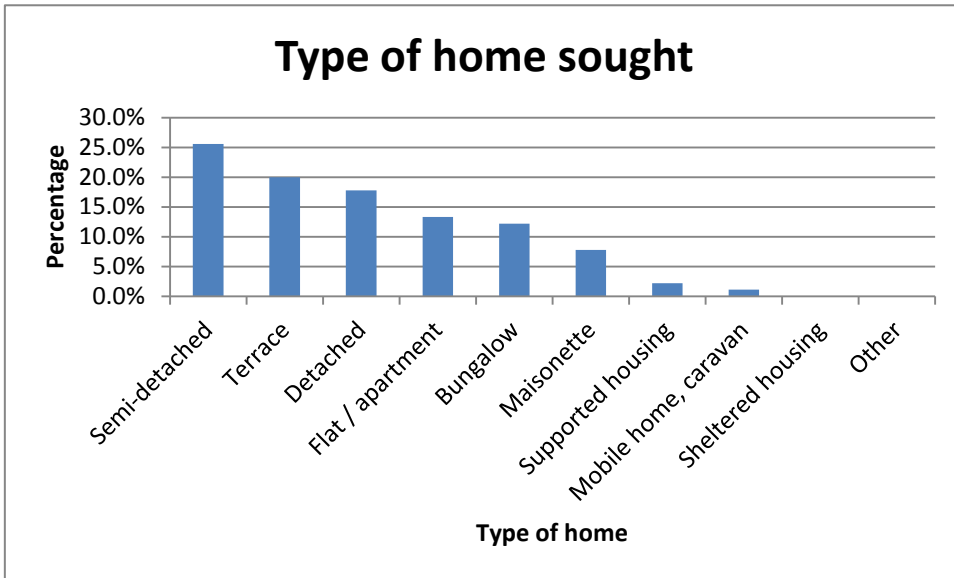
Thirty four respondents replied to this section of the survey, indicating their need for affordable housing in the Parish.

Thirty two of these households have a local connection to the Parish, either living or working in the parish, having previously lived there, or having family members there.

The respondents requiring accommodation in the Parish were asked what type of tenure they sought. They expressed a need both for subsidised or open-market homes to purchase, and for homes to rent both from private landlords and from registered social landlords. Households could indicate more than one response:



Respondents to this section were also asked what type of housing they required, with the majority seeking semi-detached properties. Full responses are given in the chart below (more than one answer could be given):



Quite high levels of need relative to other parishes were expressed for adapted properties, from accommodation on a single level (8.3% of respondents), to properties with wheelchair access (5.6%), properties fitted with emergency support systems such as Lifeline (8.3%), accommodation supplying support with personal care (5.6%), and properties with 24 hour warden support (2.8%).

The need expressed for sizes of property varied from one- to three-bedroom properties. No need was expressed for properties with 4 or more bedrooms:



The respondents were then asked if there was a lack of suitable existing housing in the Parish to meet their needs, to which 90.6% answered 'yes.'

In order to assess the need for affordable housing in the Parish, it is necessary to consider the equity, income and savings levels of respondents. 20.6% of the section two respondents did not complete the financial declaration section of the survey, and as such cannot be assessed in the following analysis.

85.2% of those who responded to these questions either did not own property or declared zero or negative equity in their homes. 51.9% possessed no savings, while a further 22.3% estimated their savings at under £10,000. Income levels were for the majority low: 22.3% of respondents estimated a combined gross household income of less than £10,499pa, and a further 51.8% estimated their household income at between £10,500 and £30,499pa.

Comparing income, savings and equity levels with the cost of open market housing in the Parish suggests that **7.4% of those who answered the financial questions would not require public support in order to achieve their required housing**. The remainder, due to low levels of savings and equity and to the cost of open market housing in the Parish, would be considered 'in housing need' as defined in section 3 of this report. These households inform the recommendations of this survey for the need for new affordable housing in the Parish, presented in section 8.

Of the households meeting the criteria for affordable housing, the majority (48%) were households headed by people aged 25-44. Nearly half of those meeting the criteria had children aged under 16, while three households headed by people aged 65+ were found to be in need of, and eligible for, affordable housing.

6. Cost of Housing

In order to investigate the cost of properties in the open market, further research has been carried out on house prices in the area.

It is possible to estimate the average property prices in the Parish area:³

Bedrooms	Oct-Dec 2011
1	£87,700
2	£131,900
3	£172,900
4	£254,400
5+	£330,800

Example calculation for a mortgage

Typically, a household making a single application can obtain a mortgage of 3.5 times their annual income, or 3x annual income for joint applications. Households would generally expect to need a deposit of around 15% of the total price.

If an average two-bedroom property in the Parish costs £131,900 then a household may require £19,785 as a deposit. Annual household income would have to be at least £32,033 for a single applicant or £37,372 for joint applicants. The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings indicates that the gross annual median income of employed persons in the North Wiltshire area in 2010 was only £19,252:⁴

- While average house prices are lower in the Parish than in many other areas of Wiltshire, it would be unlikely that a household would be able to purchase a property in this parish without a large deposit, some equity in an existing property or a substantial income.
- First time buyers would generally struggle to meet any of the criteria necessary for buying their own home.
- In some cases intermediate housing (shared ownership or low cost market housing) would be a suitable option, whilst in other instances affordable rented housing would be appropriate.

³ House price estimates from the Mouseprice local area guide to the SN5 postcode area, www.mouseprice.com/area-guide/average-house-price/ . Please note that the SN5 postcode covers a wider area than the Purton parish and that there may be significant internal variation in house prices.

⁴ Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2010, Office of National Statistics, <http://www.ons.gov.uk> . Note that while the mortgage calculation refers to household income, i.e. to the combined income of all persons in the home, the ASHE figures refer to individual income.

7. Summary

This survey's recommendations (see section 8 below) concentrate on those households who are unable to afford housing on the open market.

This is just a quarter of the research needed for this assessment: the housing register of Wiltshire Council, the local Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the advice from allocation staff who manage the register must also be taken into account.

- It is generally difficult to get accurate data on the housing need of single people, especially the under 25s, and surveys of this type tend to underestimate the figures.
- Housing development in the Parish should take account of anticipated future housing need (as described in the Wiltshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment) as well as the number of households in immediate need of more suitable housing.
- In the second quarter of 2011/12, there were seventy-two households on the Wiltshire Council Housing Register seeking affordable housing in the Parish: nine of these households are also reported on in the recommendations of this report as in need of affordable housing. The remaining households on the Register are seeking properties with between one- and three-bedrooms and any full assessment of housing need in the parish should take account of the Register.
- The total stock of affordable homes in the parish is 210 homes.⁵ These properties represent just over 12% of the total housing stock in the parish, which is lower than the Wiltshire social housing average of 19.2%.
- Affordable housing in the Parish had a 6.7% re-let rate in 2010/11: from the second quarter of 2010/11 to the second quarter of 2011/12; 14 affordable homes were re-let in the parish.⁶
- While the level of affordable housing in the Parish is quite low, the turnover of the stock indicates that **one of the households responding to section two of the survey and found to be in need of affordable housing could meet that need through access to the existing affordable housing of the Parish.**

⁵ Housing Strategy team, live tables.

⁶ *Ibid.*

8. Recommendations

This survey's recommendations describe the need of households unable to buy or rent housing on the open market.

The following indicates the minimum need over the next three years for low cost housing to buy and affordable rented housing in the Parish, based on the responses to the survey.

Affordable rented housing

- 4 x one bed home for singles / couples
- 6 x two bed home for families (1x support with personal care; 1x single-level accommodation)
- 6 x three bed home for families

Shared / Low cost housing to buy

- 1 x one bed home for a single / couple (1x with wheelchair access and emergency support system such as Lifeline)
- 3 x two bed home for families (1x support with personal care)
- 3 x three bed home for families

Sheltered housing for older people

- None

Supported housing

- 1x supported shared ownership home for a single / couple